

Administrator Manual



**For the Safe Transportation
of Pupils Grade 12 and Below**

(September 2022)

FOREWORD

The purpose of the Administrator's Manual for school bus transportation and resources is to assist the local school transportation director and the contractor's transportation managers in the overall planning as well as the day-to-day operations of transporting students. The success of any school transportation operation depends largely upon the quality of performance and the degree of dedication displayed by those charged with the responsibility of administering the school transportation program. In addition to this manual, transportation managers and supervisors should be well versed in the Illinois Professional School Bus Driver Training Curriculum and the Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim. It is also recommended that the transportation managers and superiors hold a valid commercial driver's license (CDL) with an Illinois School Bus Driver's Permit.

Responsibilities of all agencies that are involved in student transportation are outlined in this manual. These agencies include the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Secretary of State, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation, local school boards, and school bus contractors. The manual also includes the responsibilities of local school administrators, bus drivers, bus monitors/aides/escorts, parents and/or guardians, and students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ISBE would like to acknowledge the expertise and participation of the individuals in the school bus industry who contributed their time and energy to the development of this document. We are grateful for the dedication of pupil transportation personnel for their efforts toward school bus safety. Thank you for your time and experience.

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INTRODUCTION

The success of any school transportation operation depends largely upon the quality of performance and degree of dedication displayed by those involved. The resource documents outlined herein were designed to assist school administrators and private operators in understanding the needs of their pupil transportation programs. Documents that will be referred to throughout this manual are contained in the following resources:

1. [U.S. Department of Transportation](#)
2. [Illinois Secretary of State Pupil Transportation](#)
3. [Illinois Department of Transportation](#)
4. [Illinois State Board of Education Pupil Transportation Programs](#), including:
 - a. [Illinois School Bus Driver Training Curriculum](#)
 - b. [Transportation for Students with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs](#)
 - c. [Transportation for Infants, Toddlers and Pre-School Children](#)
5. [National Congress of School Transportation \(NCST\)](#)
6. [National Association School of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services \(NASDPTS\)](#)
7. [National Transportation Safety Board \(NTSB\)](#)
8. [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association \(FMCSA\)](#)
9. [Operation Lifesaver](#)
10. [American School Bus Council \(ASBC\)](#)
11. [Illinois Association for Pupil Transportation \(IAPT\)](#)
12. [National Association for Pupil Transportation \(NAPT\)](#)
13. [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#)

The purpose of this document is to outline the responsibilities of transportation providers and direct them to the resources that can help them provide safe pupil transportation.

Section I

OPERATIONS

ADMINISTRATION

The responsibilities of Illinois state agencies responsible for pupil transportation are explained in this section.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Illinois State Board of Education provides a comprehensive pupil transportation program for statewide application. This program is conducted through the office of the Funding and Disbursements - State Director of Pupil Transportation. This office provides the following:

1. A clear, concise pupil transportation policy.
2. A cost accounting system for all expenditures in the area of pupil transportation.
3. A manual explaining reimbursements for transportation expenditures.
4. Promotion of a pupil transportation safety program utilizing communities, school districts, school bus contractors, legislation, media, law enforcement, and state agencies concerned with pupil transportation.
5. A manual or handbook for local pupil transportation supervisors, school administrators, and private contractors containing procedures for implementing the state's pupil transportation laws for transporting students with special needs.
6. A comprehensive school bus driver training program for both pre-service and in-service instruction, which includes classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction and documentation of the completion of said programs.
7. Workshops, seminars, and/or conferences for all pupil transportation personnel.
8. Encouragement for state institutions of higher education to provide undergraduate and graduate courses acceptable for certification purposes in pupil transportation; operation; and safety, including continue education courses in pupil transportation, through all possible resources.
9. Comprehensive safety and ridership curricula for pupil transportation.
10. Annual visits to local school systems to evaluate transportation systems and provide necessary direction.
11. Coordination with other agencies having responsibility for pupil transportation services, including the uniform school-bus-crash reporting criteria.
12. A comprehensive education program to train instructors of school bus drivers.
13. Leadership in the handling of industrywide problems as they arise.

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

The Illinois Secretary of State has the authority to grant, issue, deny, suspend, and revoke driving privileges, drivers' licenses, or permits. As such, this office is responsible for the issuance of drivers' licenses and/or instruction permits to qualifying applicants who are required to operate Type I and Type II school buses and first division motor vehicles. The Secretary of State also:

1. Is responsible for the issuance of school bus driver permits to applicants who have met all requirements of the application and screening process, including fingerprint-based criminal background checks on current and future information obtained by the Illinois State Police and current FBI criminal background investigations. Individuals who possess a valid school bus driver permit issued prior to July 1, 1995, are exempted from the fingerprinting provisions outlined in the law as long as their permits remain valid and do not lapse or otherwise become invalidated.
2. Is responsible for monitoring driving histories of school bus drivers and notifying the driver as well as the employer of the driver's eligibility to retain a school bus driver permit.
3. Processes vehicle titles, registers vehicles, issues license plates, and renewal stickers and maintains vehicle records for all types of passenger vehicles; trucks; buses; and commercial motor vehicles, including school buses and first division vehicles, in accordance with the Illinois Vehicle Code.
4. Is responsible for notifying individuals of an opportunity for a hearing as well as conducting the hearing upon suspension, revocation, or denial of the issuance of a license, permit, registration, or certificate of title.
5. Is required by law to approve the content of any training curriculum (written test, audio/visual training materials, procedures, grading scales, etc.) that may be used in conducting the initial classroom or refresher courses needed to obtain or reapply for a school bus driver permit.
6. Has the authority to conduct on-site inspections of records of certifications and all verifications used to obtain or reapply for a school bus driver permit. These records are to be held by the prospective, current, or previous employer for a period of two years.
7. Extended the Third-Party Certification program to the pupil transportation industry by reviewing, approving, and licensing third-party entities and safety officers. Field representatives for the Commercial Driver Training Section conduct audits and monitor entities for compliance with state and federal rules and regulations involving commercial driver's licenses.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Division of Traffic Safety is governed by Illinois statutes and State and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations when determining standards for school buses and commercial motor vehicles in Illinois. IDOT:

1. Administers the program requiring periodic safety inspections of Type I and Type II school buses in Illinois.
2. Conducts nonscheduled inspections of school buses, religious organization buses, and buses registered as charitable vehicles.
3. Establishes and enforces regulations that govern the Illinois school bus brake inspection program and school bus driver pre-trip inspection requirements.
4. Sets minimum safety standards for the State of Illinois for the construction of Type I, Type II, special education school buses, and the Multi-Function School Activity Bus (MFSAB).
5. Monitors drivers of commercial motor vehicles for the State of Illinois according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.
6. Sets standards for the operation and maintenance of commercial motor vehicles for the State of Illinois to help prevent crashes and injuries while driving those vehicles.
7. Collects and compiles statistical data for the State of Illinois to be used to ensure safe pupil transportation in the State of Illinois.

REGIONAL OFFICES OF EDUCATION

Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) are responsible for the supervision and oversight of school districts (enumerated in Illinois School Code. [\[105 ILCS 5/3-14 through 3-14.25\]](#)) Responsibilities of ROEs include:

1. Conducting on-site visitations of school districts for compliance with laws, rules, and regulations.
2. Conducting courses of instruction for school bus drivers pursuant to the standards established by the Secretary of State under Section 6-106.1 of the Illinois Vehicle Code ([625 ILCS 5/6-106.1](#)).
 - a. All classes must be open to the public; no private classes allowed.
 - b. All classes must be entered into the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS)

system a minimum of two weeks prior to the class being held.

- c. The IWAS Class Attendance Roster must be used for signing in at the training classes.
 - d. A signed copy of the IWAS Certificate of Completions shall be emailed to the employer no more than five days following the class completion. The IWAS Certificate of Completions shall also be mailed to the employer no more than two weeks following the class completion. The employer will provide the employee (driver) with a copy of the certificate for their personal records.
3. Conducting investigations when there has been a report of the failure to meet the instructional requirements of a training class.
 4. Charging a per-person fee for the initial classroom course in school bus driver safety. ([105 ILCS 5/3-14.23](#)) If an initial class is used to satisfy the refresher class, the driver must attend the entire initial class and pass the initial exam.
 5. Charging a per-person fee for the annual refresher training course. ([105 ILCS 5/3-14.23](#))
 6. Conducting investigations as may be necessary to ensure that all persons hired to operate school buses have valid school bus driver permits as required under Sections 6-104 and 6-106.1 of the Illinois Vehicle Code. ([625 ILCS 5/6-104](#) and [625 ILCS 5/6-106.1](#))
 7. Conducting hearings when there is evidence of noncompliance with No. 6 above.
 8. Conducting investigations as needed to ensure that classroom training is provided to students on school bus safety, including emergency evacuation drills, required by law once annually. ([105 ILCS 128/20\(b\)](#))
 9. Maintain accurate records within IWAS of the drivers trained.
 10. Maintain accurate records within IWAS of certified Illinois school bus driver instructors.
 11. Distribute information to the school transportation departments or to the school bus contractors within their region when ISBE requests them to do so.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARDS

Local administrators and school boards should develop policies and procedures to:

1. Ensure compliance with federal and state pupil transportation laws; regulations; and policies, including drug and alcohol testing programs as required in the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 and in compliance with 49 CFR [Parts 40](#) and [382](#).

2. Oversee pupil transportation operations within their jurisdiction, including training programs for all transportation personnel, review of school bus routes, investigation and reporting of accidents and other transportation problems, and evaluation of the pupil transportation system.
3. Ensure that instruction in passenger safety, including student participation in emergency evacuation drills, is an integral part of the school curriculum as required by law once annually. Instruction required by Illinois is stated in the Illinois School Code. ([105 ILCS 128/20\(b\)](#))
4. Provide supervision of loading and unloading areas at or near the school and provide ongoing safety evaluations of route pickup and drop off locations.
5. Provide adequate supervision for pupils whose bus schedules necessitate their early arrival or late departure from school.
6. Promote public understanding of, and support for, the school transportation program in general.
7. Develop and implement local pupil transportation policies and regulations, including those for special education.

STATE DIRECTOR OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

The state director of pupil transportation represents the State of Illinois and ISBE at national and state meetings. The state director also

1. Is responsible for coordinating all transportation programs within Funding and Disbursement at ISBE, including functions of the Intermediate Service Center of North Cook that are handled by staff within the Chicago office location.
2. Develops and implements training programs and curricula for safe school transportation for school bus drivers and instructors of school bus drivers and certifies state school bus driver instructors.
3. Responds to questions regarding the interpretation of rules, laws, and legal opinions concerning school transportation.
4. Prepares materials for public relations with districts and parents concerning safe school transportation practices.
5. Develops administrative resources on student transportation for regional and school

district administrators.

6. Provides technical assistance by phone, email, document preparation, and on-site visitations and presentations concerning student transportation services.
7. Handles policy and regulatory implementation involving responses to districts, regional superintendents, parents, and contractors and answers all questions regarding school district transportation requirements.
8. Reviews and evaluates legislative proposals and proposes legislation related to school transportation.

LOCAL PUPIL TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR

The local pupil transportation director and/or private contractor's specific duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing assistance in planning, budgeting, and forecasting for the pupil transportation system.
2. Assisting in school site selection and facility planning.
3. Providing, when appropriate, for chassis, body, and related equipment procurement.
4. Developing and implementing an ongoing plan for preventive care and maintenance of equipment.
5. Recruiting, selecting, instructing, and supervising personnel.
6. Routing and scheduling buses for safe, efficient, and economical transportation service.
7. Assisting in the development and implementation of pupil safety education programs.
8. Working with administrators, teachers, transportation personnel, students, parents, and various public and private agencies to improve their knowledge and the quality of the transportation system.
9. Investigating and reporting accidents, when applicable, using the [Uniform School Bus Accident Report form](#) found on the ISBE website.
10. Investigating problems that are reported.
11. Maintaining records and preparing reports, as required.

12. Developing and supervising an ongoing evaluation plan for the pupil transportation system.
13. Implementing and maintaining a drug and alcohol testing program in compliance with federal regulations (49 CFR [Parts 40](#) and [382](#)) for persons in safety-sensitive positions and CDL drivers, as well as a supervisor trained on “reasonable suspicion.”
The types of drug and alcohol testing include the following:
 - a. Pre-employment Testing
 - b. Random Testing
 - c. Post-Accident Testing
 - d. Reasonable Suspicion Testing
 - e. Return to Duty Testing
 - f. Follow-up Testing
14. Developing and implementing a procedure for route hazard(s) evaluation.

Qualifications

The pupil transportation director and/or private contractor should have a basic understanding of the educational process and the corresponding role of transportation. The school transportation director and/or private contractor should receive formal instruction in pupil transportation management. This training should include classroom work and field experience. Qualifications should include:

1. A satisfactory driving record that is confirmed via checks with the National Driver Register Service and the Secretary of State’s Driver Services Section, a satisfactory work history, and a record free of criminal convictions.
2. An undergraduate degree or equivalent experience in one or more of the following fields of study:
 - a. Education
 - b. Business administration
 - c. Management
 - d. Transportation or related field
3. The ability to manage personnel and resources.
4. Knowledge of computers.
5. The ability to communicate effectively with school administrators, teachers, parents, students, bus drivers, law enforcement, etc.
6. Knowledge of state and federal regulations applicable to transportation of pupils.
7. It is strongly encouraged that they attend the Annual State School Bus Conference and hold the equivalent license as a school bus driver (CDL with an Illinois School Bus Driver Permit).

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

1. Each employer should provide a driver's manual or handbook to each school bus driver at the time of employment. This manual should include the following information:
 - a. Applicants for a school bus driving position should be given the employer's handbook or manual and receive a copy of the Illinois School Bus Driver Training Curriculum at the initial school bus driver training.
 - b. The state transportation laws, regulations, and policies.
 - c. Motor vehicle rules and regulations applicable to school bus operation.
 - d. Vehicle operation and maintenance.
 - e. Procedures for the driver to perform when involved in an accident, when witnessing an accident, and when involved with post-accident reporting.
 - f. Elements of basic first aid procedures and any local practices and policies that may vary from, but should not conflict with, state requirements.
 - g. Elements of pupil management.
 - h. Requirements of the federal drug and alcohol testing program.
2. Procedures for selection of school bus drivers should include:
 - a. An appropriate application form.
 - b. A check of the applicant's driving record (a function of the Illinois Secretary of State's Office).
 - c. A school bus driver fingerprint check to determine if the applicant has a record of criminal convictions through both the Illinois-specific criminal background check and the Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check. Establish criteria for rejecting those with unacceptable records. (This is a function of the Illinois State Police.)
 - d. One or more personal interviews conducted by the employer. (A properly conducted interview can be one of the most important of the selection procedures.)
 - e. A physical examination administered by a physician licensed in medicine; there will be tests for tuberculosis and other communicable diseases. Drug testing should be included, although the driving position may not require a commercial driver's license. The physical examination will be conducted annually in accordance with state law (required as part of the licensing requirement of the Illinois Secretary of State).
 - f. A determination of educational attainment. A school bus driver applicant should demonstrate the ability to follow detailed, written instructions and to record and report data accurately.

Note: The laws and rules and regulations for the above can be found in the [Illinois Professional School Bus Driver Training Curriculum](#) appendix as well as on the [ISBE website](#).

3. An instructional program is required for school bus drivers.
 - a. Illinois requires applicants to take a state-approved initial classroom training

course (Curriculum development is a function of the Illinois State Board of Education.) and an employer classroom and behind-the-wheel training course enabling safe and efficient vehicle operation before pupils can be transported. (Curriculum development is a function of the employer in compliance with the [FMCSA Entry Level Driver Training](#) requirements that are effective February 7, 2022.)

- b. Illinois law requires an annual state-approved refresher training course. (Refresher training content is a function of ISBE.)
 - c. The driver should receive appropriate training in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act before transporting students with disabilities. (This is a function of the employer.)
 - d. Drivers shall receive drug and alcohol education as required in the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 and in compliance with 49 CFR [Parts 40](#) and [382](#). (This is a function of the employer.)
4. Behind-the-wheel instruction in compliance with the [FMCSA Entry Level Driver Training](#) requirements that are effective February 7, 2022, should be given in the same type and size school bus as the driver will be operating. A driver who is expected to operate more than one size and type of vehicle should be given instruction related to the specific handling characteristics of each. All instruction should include, but not limited to:
- a. Familiarization with the bus and its equipment.
 - b. Procedures for performing pre-trip and post-trip vehicle inspections.
 - c. Techniques for safe driving, including proper mirror use and adjustment, smooth starts and stops, shifting, turning, and backing.
 - d. Defensive driving skills.
 - e. Techniques for reference-point driving.
 - f. Procedures for loading and unloading pupils at bus stops, including moving the bus only after all children are safely out of the danger zones and are at least 10 feet from the bus.
 - g. Procedures for railroad crossings and other specialized driving requirements for school bus operations.
 - h. Techniques to identify and avoid practices that result in driver-related vehicle abuse.
 - i. Procedures for in-route emergencies, including driving emergencies, emergency evacuations, and use of emergency equipment.
 - j. Guidelines for safely running a route, including entering and departing the bus garage and yard, following a route sheet and map, entering and departing school zones, and responding to mechanical difficulties and breakdowns.
 - k. Procedure for fueling buses, including handling and preventing fuel spills.
 - l. Proper radio usage, including AM/FM, public address system, two-way radio communication, and school-issued cell phones.
 - m. Proper procedures for reporting route hazards.
5. All school bus drivers should be adequately prepared each day, both physically and

mentally, to perform certain duties, including:

- a. Operating the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner.
 - b. Conducting thorough pre-trip and post-trip inspections of the vehicle and special equipment.
 - c. Ensuring the safety, welfare, and orderly conduct of passengers while on the bus.
 - d. Handling emergencies in accordance with operating procedures.
 - e. Communicating effectively and appropriately with school staff, students, parents, law enforcement officials, and the motoring public.
 - f. Completing required reports.
 - g. Completing required training programs successfully.
 - h. Providing maximum safety for passengers during loading and unloading.
 - i. Wearing driver's seat belt whenever the bus is in motion.
 - j. Checking that all students have disembarked from the bus at the end of the route by walking the interior of the school bus from front to back, checking in and under seats to ensure that there are no students on the bus.
 - k. Managing and knowing policies, including state and federal regulations related to the transportation of students with disabilities.
6. School bus drivers should be evaluated at regular intervals. These evaluations should include:
- a. Written tests
 - b. Road performance checks
 - c. Evaluation interviews

BUS ATTENDANT/ESCORT/MONITOR/AIDE

Bus attendant/escort/monitor/aide should receive instruction in the following areas:

1. The bus and its equipment.
2. Use of emergency exits.
3. The safe loading and unloading of pupils at their stops.
4. Pupil management training and policy training, including state and federal regulations related to the transportation of students with disabilities, consistent with those required for school bus drivers.
5. The safety, welfare, and orderly conduct of passengers while on the bus.
6. Emergencies in accordance with operating procedures.

7. Effective communications with school staff, students, bus drivers, parents, law enforcement officials, and the motoring public.
8. The completion of required written reports.
9. Encouraged to attend an initial school bus driver training class and an annual refresher class to learn policies and emergency procedures in order to assist the school bus driver.
10. Thorough knowledge of students' medical needs, if appropriate.
11. Thorough knowledge of the route (e.g., pickup and drop-off locations, directions, hazards, etc.) (The employer is responsible for training and qualifying drivers.)
12. [ROE 31 \(Kane County\) has developed a School Bus Attendant Training Guide.](#)

MAINTENANCE AND SERVICE PERSONNEL

1. Adequate staff should be employed to perform maintenance functions on a timely basis consistent with safe transportation practices.
2. Maintenance and service personnel and anyone else performing safety-sensitive functions shall be subject to drug/alcohol testing required under federal and state Department of Transportation Regulations [\(49 CFR Part 382\)](#).
3. Instructional programs should be provided for maintenance and service personnel.
 - a. The transportation system should make available to their maintenance and service personnel the necessary maintenance and service publications for the equipment that must be serviced.
 - b. The transportation system should arrange, at regular intervals, for pre-service and in-service training for maintenance and service personnel. It should also require or encourage maintenance personnel to attend state-sponsored or approved workshops or training institutes.
 - c. It is strongly encouraged that they attend the Annual State School Bus Conference.
 - d. The training procedures should include, but not limited to, instruction in:
 - i. Preventive maintenance procedures.
 - ii. Repair and/or installation procedures for each type of fleet vehicle and its varied equipment.
 - iii. Procedures for specialized equipment.
 - iv. Inspection of the vehicle and its equipment.
 - v. Recovery procedures for vehicles involved in an accident or breakdown.
 - vi. Preparation of maintenance records.
 - vii. Maintenance of parts and equipment inventory.

- viii. Establishment of parts inventory control procedures.
- ix. Repair and installation of adaptive equipment.
- x. Environmental compliance should include a thorough knowledge of the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency laws, rules, and regulations governing school buses.

PROCEDURES

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The responsible state agency and the local school district should have clear and concise policies and guidelines for the operation of their pupil transportation programs. These are important for two reasons: (1) they may have the effect of law when laws or regulations do not specifically address a situation; (2) they serve as the rule book for persons charged with the administration of transportation services within the district.

Once established, these policies and guidelines become the basis for development of operating procedures. This allows decisions about operational details to be made at the administrative level rather than by the school board. These written policies and guidelines should be precise and should cover the following topics:

1. Procedures for determining eligibility for transportation. (See [Article 29](#) of the School Code.)
2. A description of the types of transportation being provided.
3. The days on which services will be available.
4. A list of school starting and closing times.
5. Administrative responsibilities related to program service.
6. Essential routing constraints.
7. The extent of special transportation service.
8. A compilation of pupil rules and regulations
9. Provisions for the use of contract transportation and/or charter buses.
10. Acceptable purchasing procedures.
11. Desired limits of insurance coverage.
12. The essentials of an accident prevention program, including the [Uniform School Bus](#)

[Accident Report form.](#)

13. Communication procedures between drivers and administrators, parents, and bus company. Information should include student disciplinary rules and consequences.
14. Emergency procedures and/or contingency plans to be followed in the event of an accident, unexpected school closing, or unforeseen route change. Contingency plans should also be in place for aggressive actions, such as a hostage situation, active shooter, or unlawful boarding.
15. There should be a clearly determined point at the student drop-off location for each district building. Walk zones will be calculated from that point.

USE OF SPECIAL LIGHTING AND SIGNALING EQUIPMENT

1. The alternately flashing amber signal lamps of an 8-lamp flashing signal system shall be activated continuously during not less than the last 100 feet traveled by the school bus before stopping for the purpose of loading or discharging pupils within an urban area and during not less than 200 feet traveled by the school bus outside an urban area. The amber signal lamps shall be activated until the school bus is stopped and shall not be activated at any other time. [\(625 ILCS 5/11-1414\(d\)\)](#)
2. The alternately flashing red signal lamps of an 8-lamp flashing signal system shall be actuated after the bus has come to a complete stop for the purpose of loading or discharging pupils and shall be turned off before the school bus is placed in motion again. The red signal lamps shall not be activated at any other time except as provided in paragraph (d) of Section 11-1414. (See above.) [\(625 ILCS 5/11-1414\(c\)\)](#)
3. The stop signal arm shall be extended after the school bus has come to a complete stop for the purpose of loading or discharging pupils and shall be closed before the school bus is placed in motion again. The stop signal arm shall not be extended at any other time. [\(625 ILCS 5/11-1414\(b\)\)](#)

The 8-lamp system must be activated every time the bus is stopped to load or unload passengers regardless of the location.

4. A white flashing strobe light to increase the visibility of the school bus on the roadway, especially during adverse visibility conditions, may be used. The school bus must actually be used as a school bus. It also must be stopping or stopped for loading/discharging pupils on a highway outside an urban area or is bearing one or more pupils. [\(625 ILCS 5/12-815\)](#)
5. Crossing control arms shall be used as required to encourage children to cross properly

in front of school buses. ([625 ILCS 5/12-807.2](#))

6. Outside public address systems may be used for instructing children in crossing roadways and for informing them of potentially life-threatening situations.
7. Motion sensors may be used where appropriate to alert the driver of an impending safety hazard to students disembarking the bus.

PERSONNEL

1. An organization chart identifying the flow of responsibility from the Board of Education to the school bus driver should be provided.
2. Employees should be provided with job specifications and descriptions at the time of employment.

PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

1. State

- a. All new school bus drivers shall be provided with basic classroom instruction by certified state school bus driver instructors on the safe operation of a school bus and shall be issued the proper license and permit for the legal vehicle being used to transport students upon completion of all licensing and permitting requirements. ([625 ILCS 5/6-106.1\(8\)](#))
- b. All school bus drivers shall be provided with a minimum of two hours of refresher training taught by state-certified instructors. ([625 ILCS 5/6-106.1\(8\)](#))

2. District/Employer

- a. All new school bus drivers shall be provided with sufficient practical behind-the-wheel instruction to ensure that the applicant has exhibited proficiency in the safe and proper operation of a school bus in compliance with the [FMCSA Entry Level Driver Training](#) requirements that are effective February 7, 2022. This training is in conjunction with the classroom training that is provided by state instructors during the initial class.
- b. All drivers should be provided with annual in-service/continuing education in safe school bus operation in addition to attending the annual state-mandated refresher.

USE OF VIDEO / GPS MONITORING SYSTEMS

School systems should promulgate, communicate, and enforce policies and procedures to be followed when using on-board video monitoring systems. The video camera on a school bus should be used only as an aid to monitor the students' and drivers' behavior. It should not replace the discipline policy, the authority of the driver, or the responsibility of the school officials. The basic safe riding rules must prevail, and the consequences of misconduct must be carried out.

1. All students and drivers should be notified that they are subject to being videotaped on the school bus at any time. Notification to parents of all students should be made by the school district. Prior to actual taping, parents and students should be advised that conduct prohibited by state and school district student discipline codes will result in appropriate consequences as defined in policy. The actual recording should be audio and video.
2. Ongoing notification regarding video recording must occur addressing the continued need for personal awareness of safety issues. This communication is particularly important to warn against a false sense of security, especially when cameras are moved between buses. Newsletters, student handouts, and notices posted in the bus should be considered.
3. If video cameras are to be used for monitoring drivers, the drivers should be notified as to the extent of their use and for what purpose they will be used.
4. Cameras should be scheduled on a rotation basis so as not to select only certain buses. Video monitoring of a bus route may be done more frequently based on the number of incidents of misconduct or the seriousness of these reports. The transportation supervisor may decide if more frequent monitoring is needed.
5. After video recording has been conducted, the recordings are to be stored at a secure location for a period of time designated by the local school district, unless a specific recording is being used in an ongoing action. The transportation supervisor or designee should periodically review randomly selected video recordings to ensure proper pupil conduct. If no incidents are reported within a period defined by local policy, the recordings can be recycled. If incidents are reported or if incidents are viewed during random selection, the video recordings are to be kept until final resolution and the time for any appeals has passed.

Video recordings must be dated and have the bus number and driver's name in order to ensure proper pupil conduct.

6. When action is taken as a result of information obtained from the videorecording, the

driver, supervisor, school administrator, student, and parents or guardians will be contacted. A meeting of the aforementioned parties may be necessary to achieve a resolution of the problem. The recording may be used as evidence in that meeting. All requests for review should be made in writing.

7. Each district must have a policy that designates who will be allowed to review the video recordings. [\(720 ILCS 5/14-3m\)](#)
8. The use of GPS – may be used for, but not limited to monitoring speed, operations of lights, door operations, and video and tracking of the bus and students.

SEATING

1. No school bus shall be operated with more passengers than recommended by the manufacturer. [\(625 ILCS 5/12-707\)](#)
2. In determining seating capacity of a bus, individual seating should be based on 13 inches per child where a 3-3 (three pupils on both sides of aisle) seating plan is used and 15 inches where a 3-2 (three pupils on one side of aisle and two pupils on other side of aisle) seating plan is used.
3. School buses may transport three to a seat if passengers are in Grades 1 through 5 and two per seat in Grades 9-12. School districts should vary the capacity of the bus depending on the size of the students for students in Grades 6 through 8. This ensures every student the safety factor of compartmentalization. This is only a recommendation. May not apply in all cases. Refer to No. 2 above.
4. Standing while school buses and school-chartered buses are in motion shall not be permitted.

NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

Consider the following for new construction or sight improvement:

1. Separate and adequate space for school bus loading zones, including proper pavement thickness and materials to facilitate the weight and repeated use of a school bus.
2. Clearly marked and controlled walkways through school bus zones.
3. Traffic flow and parking patterns for the public and non-bused students separated from the loading zone.

4. A designated loading area for students with disabilities.
5. An organized schedule of loading areas with clearly marked stops.
6. A loading and unloading site to eliminate the backing of transportation equipment.

ROUTING AND SCHEDULING

Routing is the responsibility of the local school board. It is necessary to procure a map of the area served by a particular school or school system in order to establish bus routes that will adequately meet the needs of pupils in a particular area. Information on the road conditions, railroad crossings, and other factors that might affect the particular operation should be recorded along with the location of homes and the number of school-age children in each. Satisfactory school bus stops must be identified along streets and highways where buses can travel with the least amount of risk.

The number of pupils to be transported and the distance to be traveled are primary factors in allocating equipment for a particular area. Pupils should be assigned to specific stops according to walking distances, grade level, and the school attended. Consideration should be given to the distances between stops to comply with the minimum distance required to activate the red and amber lighting systems. Routing and seating plans must be coordinated so as to eliminate passengers standing when a school bus or school-chartered bus is in motion.

Routing Techniques

1. A circular route circumscribes an area by using different roads on outgoing and incoming trips. It has the advantage of equalizing time in transit for transported pupils since the first child on in the morning is the first child off in the evening.
2. A shoestring route extends from the school to some terminal point in the district. If the bus is stored at the school, the same road or roads are used on the outgoing and incoming trips; consequently, children are always traveling more or less directly toward the school.
3. A feeder route extends from a point farther out in the district to a transfer point on the main route. It may be advisable for one or more of the following reasons:
 - a. To limit the use of large buses to improved roads.
 - b. To reduce travel time on the main route.
 - c. To provide some form of transportation on roads that at times may not be navigable by larger, more desirable motor vehicles.
4. A shuttle route extends between two or more school buildings. Such routes are often required for the transfer of pupils in districts operating two or more schools.

5. Retracing routes can eliminate the need for pupils to cross the roadway.
6. Emergency routes may be established and utilized in all school systems when weather or road conditions dictate that it is not safe to travel on other than hard-surfaced roads. Announcements can be made by radio, TV, text messages, email, or other means when such routings are to be used.
7. Computer-assisted routing systems are an effective tool. A route hazard map will visually pinpoint railroad crossings and other hazards.

Methods of Serving Bus Routes

1. The single-trip plan involves a morning and an afternoon trip by one bus on each route. This form of service is well adapted to sparsely settled areas. It also meets the needs of schools where the instructional program requires both elementary and secondary pupils to arrive at the same time.
2. The double-trip plan calls for each bus to cover two different routes in the morning and afternoon. This plan is suited to districts of relatively dense population where distances are not great. As children of all grades are carried on each trip, program adjustments in the instructional schedule are necessary to avoid idle waiting time at the school. If these adjustments can be made without sacrificing the interests of the children, the double trip may be economical by requiring fewer buses.
3. The multiple or dual plan calls for more than two trips each morning and afternoon over the same route by each bus. This arrangement is feasible only where route distances are relatively short or time differences between locations are great. High school pupils may be brought to school on the first morning trip with elementary children arriving on the second trip. In the afternoon, the elementary children should be brought home first if it is desired that the elementary day be shorter than the high school day. Districts whose program requires a day of equal length for both groups may transport the high school pupils on the first trip in the morning and return them on the first trip in the afternoon.

Survey and Stops

The district pupil transportation director should conduct a survey to identify factors that might indicate the need for a route change. After the survey is completed, a time study should be made by driving over the route in the same equipment that will be used in the actual operation. The driver(s) who will operate over the route(s) should regard the trip as a dry run. All scheduled stops and time between stops should be indicated. This data, if accurately obtained, will permit the development of a schedule, which probably will need little revision once it is placed into effect. After the route has been established, a schedule showing individual stops and any route hazards should be available in the bus for substitute drivers. Routing software systems can aid in this application.

Requests for new or additional service should be investigated thoroughly before a change is made. Stops should be established only after thorough investigation has revealed the location to be the most desirable in the area. It is considered unsafe practice to negotiate a U-turn or backing maneuver on main arteries of traffic even though provisions for such turns have been made. The projection of the rear end of the bus into inside traffic lanes from medians that are too narrow to accommodate bus length often interferes with traffic and places the pupils' lives in jeopardy. Stops should always be located at a distance from the crest of a hill or curve to allow motorists traveling at the posted speed to stop within the sight distance.

Additional precautions should include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. Determine the location and destination of all pupils to be transported.
2. Provide the driver, attendance officer, and the transportation office with the following information:
 - a. A list of pupils on the bus(es).
 - b. Approximate times for pickup and return of pupils.
 - c. A map indicating routing of the bus and pupil locations.
 - d. Identification of pupils with dormant medical problems that may require specific actions from the driver in the event the problem becomes active.
3. Provide parents or guardians of all pupils with the driver's name, bus number, pickup and return times, school closing information, school calendar, procedures to challenge routing decisions, discipline policies, etc.
4. Routing software is an excellent tool to assist in route scheduling and route hazard maps.
5. Plan routes that will permit optimum pupil safety, program efficiency, and operational economy.
6. Evaluate routes twice annually, at times buses would be running routes, to determine whether conditions have changed from the original routing plan.

Supervisory Actions

Supervisory actions that should be taken during and after the transportation director completes a review of bus routes include the following:

1. Check the route and schedule for accuracy.
2. Determine that loading and unloading occurs only at authorized stops.

3. Check to see that vehicles are operated in compliance with prescribed regulations.
4. Observe the driver-pupil relationship.
5. Check loading and unloading conditions at school centers for safety and overall operation.
6. Check for evidence of supervision in loading zones at school centers.
7. Note hazardous road conditions or areas and include on route description.
8. Note the nature, frequency, and locations of bus stop arm violations.
9. Observe conditions of bus (e.g., cleanliness, tires, windows, emergency exit(s), first aid kits, fire extinguisher, seats, etc.).
10. Observe vehicle inspection guide for evidence of pre-trip inspection.
11. Note the driver's attitude toward other motorists and pedestrians.
12. Follow up the observation with a written report and discussion with the driver (and others, as appropriate).
13. File the written report in the driver's permanent records.

Inspection of Equipment

A thorough and systematic inspection procedure is the essence of a planned preventive maintenance program. Daily inspections of the vehicle will alert the driver to the need for minor repairs and adjustments. Failure to conduct such inspections for any sustained period of time could result in more extensive repairs at a later date. Inspection, therefore, is an indispensable factor in a safe school transportation system.

The school bus driver is the key to an effective daily inspection program. It is the driver's responsibility to make a planned and systematic inspection of the bus before each trip. The pre-trip inspection shall consist of inspecting mechanical and safety equipment on the school bus. ([625 ILCS 5/13-115](#))

RECORDKEEPING

Accident Records

Accident records function as the database for statistical analysis, which, in turn, provides material for accident prevention programs. In addition to the uniform school bus accident reporting criteria, additional accident records should include:

1. A list of all pupils injured, their home addresses, phone numbers, the extent of their injuries, and appropriate explanations.
2. A list of bus occupants and witnesses, including addresses, phone numbers, and statements.
3. Extent of damage and estimate of repair cost.
4. Post-accident data (e.g., disposition of litigation and/or summonses, driver deposition, net effect of personal injuries, etc.).
5. A signed statement from the bus driver concerning the particulars of the accident.
6. Complaints, challenges, and disposition of hearings, etc.
7. Results from the post-accident drug and alcohol testing, if applicable.

Personnel Records

Personnel records should contain the following types of information:

1. Applications from all employees that include the following:
 - a. Confirmed work history.
 - b. Driving record (Motor Vehicle Record).
 - c. Criminal record (Illinois school bus driver-specific and FBI fingerprint background check).
 - d. Military record, if applicable.
 - e. Check the [FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse](#) records.

In considering application formats, districts should verify acceptable questions with the Illinois Department of Human Rights. Most states do not permit questions relative to age, sex, marital status, etc.

2. Physical examination.

3. Alcohol and drug testing in compliance with the Omnibus Drug Testing Act of 1991.
4. Training and testing records in compliance with the [FMCSA Entry Level Driver Training](#) requirements that are effective February 7, 2022, but not limited to:
 - a. Behind the wheel
 - b. Knowledge
 - c. Hours of instruction
 - d. Name(s) of instructor(s)
 - e. Exam results, if applicable
5. Payroll records:
 - a. Absences and their causes
 - b. Current wages
 - c. Years of service
6. Complaints, commendations, evaluations, etc.
7. Organizational records:
 - a. Number of employees
 - b. Wage scales
 - c. Other records, as required
8. Accidents, violations, etc.

Route Records

Route records should contain:

1. Types of routes (urban, suburban, rural)
2. Route descriptions, including accurate route maps
3. Route miles
4. Information about the needs of special education pupils
5. Information pertaining to road conditions, hazards, etc.

Maintenance Records

Maintenance records should contain the following:

1. Vehicle specifications, as ordered/assembled

2. Work orders
3. Preventive maintenance records
4. Vehicle depreciation
5. Equipment specifications
6. Inspection reports

Expense Records

Expense records should contain data in the following categories:

1. Vehicles
2. Labor
3. Parts
4. Inventory
5. Administrative

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The school transportation director, school administrator, teachers, drivers, maintenance and service personnel, pupils, and others should be instructed in the procedures to be followed for the following emergencies:

1. Accident
2. Sudden disability of driver
3. Bus breakdown
4. Inclement weather conditions
5. Other types of emergency situations, such as:
 - a. Civil defense drills
 - b. Strikes by school staff, teachers, drivers, or contractors
 - c. Bus hijacking

- d. Floods.
- e. Weapons on board school bus or at bus stop and active shooters
- f. Unauthorized boarding, etc.

COMMUNICATIONS

It is necessary to keep those in charge of the system, bus companies, parents, and pupils informed of all operational procedures. The school district must ensure that the channels of communication are set up so that information can be disseminated quickly and effectively. The school district must ensure that inquiries, requests, suggestions, and recommendations are given prompt and appropriate attention and are handled efficiently.

Some of the ways information can be disseminated are:

1. Bulletins
2. Meetings
3. Public press
4. Conferences
5. Letters
6. Telephone calls
7. Radio and television
8. Formal hearings
9. Email
10. Social media
11. Automated text and phone call systems

ACCIDENT REPORTING

The following data should be integrated into the generic traffic collision report for motor vehicle accidents, if not currently documented, by attaching documentation, if necessary:

- Carrier's name, school district, school bus contractor, etc.
- Driver's name, drivers' license number, birth date, sex, driving record.
- Vehicle make, body make, chassis make, model year, vehicle identification number.
- Specify whether engine location is forward, beneath, or behind windshield.
- Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) and rated seating capacity. Mark W if bus is equipped to accommodate wheelchairs.
- Number of passengers on the bus, excluding driver.
- Date, time, and location of accident.
- Police report number, if applicable.
- Specify whether a citation was issued.
- Medical attention given.
- Drug-testing procedures followed in compliance with 49 CFR [Parts 40](#) and [382](#).

The Illinois accident reporting form is designed to collect the majority of information that is needed. However, when a school bus is physically involved in an accident, the following information should be reported to the regional superintendent of schools, along with a copy of the Illinois Traffic Crash Report. The [Uniform School Bus Accident Report](#) should be used.

Section II

PUPIL MANAGEMENT

PUPIL MANAGEMENT

An effective pupil management program is a collaborative effort involving many groups of people in the school community. Parents, students, school bus drivers, school administrators, and private contractors in districts where contract transportation is provided, law enforcement, and social service agencies must be part of the ongoing process to motivate students to good behavior. It is the responsibility of the school district to ensure that a comprehensive student management program is developed so all persons involved in the process are familiar with their responsibilities.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Establish the policies and procedures by which the transportation program functions.
2. Establish pupil regulations governing the behavior and safety of pupils while boarding, riding, and disembarking the school bus. A copy of the rules students are expected to follow should be posted in the bus and made available to all riders. A list of “Instructions to School Bus Riders” can be found in the [Illinois Professional School Bus Driver Training Curriculum](#). Each district is strongly encouraged to adopt all these rules (and not subtract any of them). Additional rules may be added on the local level.
3. Institute and administer an instructional program that teaches pupils proper conduct and safety procedures.
 - a. School districts should develop written policies and procedures dealing with all forms of harassment on the school bus. Harassment is the use or tolerance of verbal or physical behavior that threatens, demeans, annoys, or torments another person. Harassment includes unwanted activities or comments based on race, gender, personal attributes, and others as determined in local policy.
 - b. School districts should develop and implement guidelines for administering

appropriate disciplinary actions resulting from an act of harassment or bullying.

4. Conduct a training program for school bus drivers to ensure that all policies, procedures, regulations, and their enforcement are understood. School districts should develop training programs to assist drivers in recognizing harassment or bullying and identifying appropriate intervention and reporting strategies.
5. Ensure that parents receive written copies of the bus rules and regulations. Clearly establish their roles and obligations with respect to pupil promptness, attitude, and behavior.
6. Initiate procedures to ensure open lines of communication and cooperation between school administrators, bus company officials, state agencies, and bus drivers.
7. Train drivers in specific skills that will enable them to maintain order, safety, and respect for the rights of others. These skills should include specific verbal intervention techniques used to maintain order and communication skills that promote rapport and mutual respect and encourage pupil compliance.
8. Ensure that administrators support and enforce disciplinary procedures, policies, and reasonable actions by the driver.
9. Develop a weapons policy for the district's school buses. State law mandates expulsion for students who bring weapons to school. ([105 ILCS/10-22.6 \(d\)](#))

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Be familiar with and abide by all rules, policies, and procedures affecting pupil transportation.
2. Recognize the importance of establishing rapport with parents, the transportation supervisor, and school administrators when working to ensure proper pupil conduct.
3. Establish proper rapport with pupils.
4. Instruct pupils in proper behavior, consequences of improper behavior, general procedures, and evacuation drills under the supervision of the district superintendent.
5. Maintain order and safety and secure the rights of others on the school bus. Drivers should exercise good judgment and prudence in this pursuit, using appropriate verbal intervention, including, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Minimize interior noise.
 - b. Control passenger movement while the bus is in motion.

- c. Require orderly entrances and exits.
 - d. Eliminate movement or potential movement of objects.
 - e. Require total silence at railroad crossings.
 - f. Prohibit transportation of unauthorized materials.
6. Handle minor infractions with school district-approved, on-board consequences and discussions.
 7. In instances of serious or recurring misconduct, follow school district policy pertaining to misconduct and submit written reports on appropriate forms to administrators or other persons designated to deal with discipline problems.
 8. Be aware that the bus drivers represent the school system and/or the bus company and present a positive image in dress, language, and manner while on duty.
 9. Be familiar with the assigned routes and designated school bus stops.

Note: Drivers should be familiar with the [Illinois Professional School Bus Driver Training Curriculum](#), which lists drivers' rules and responsibilities.

PUPIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Proper pupil behavior is important. Distracting the driver can contribute to crashes. Pupils and parents should be made aware of and abide by reasonable regulations to enhance safety. The consequences of unacceptable behavior should be clearly understood. Accepting the following responsibilities will protect the pupils' rights and maintain order on the bus:

1. Be aware that they are responsible for their actions and behavior.
2. Know what the rules and procedures are and abide by them.
3. Display proper respect for the rights and comfort of others.
4. Realize that school bus transportation can be denied by the administration if students do not conduct themselves properly. School bus transportation is a privilege and the privilege can be taken away for disciplinary reasons.
5. Be aware that any driver distraction is potentially hazardous to their safety as well as all of the passengers on the bus.
6. Be aware of the dangers involved in and around loading and unloading zones, including the dangers of loose clothing, clothing accessories, and other loose personal items.

Note: Refer to [Illinois Professional School Bus Driver Training Curriculum](#) for “Instructions to School Bus Riders.”

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Become familiar with district rules and policies, regulations, and principles of school bus safety.
2. Assist children in understanding safety rules and encourage them to abide by them.
3. Recognize parent/guardian responsibilities for the actions of their children.
4. Support safe riding practices and reasonable discipline efforts.
5. Teach children proper procedures for safely crossing the roadway before boarding and after leaving the bus.
6. Support procedures for emergency evacuation as prescribed by state and school district.
7. Respect the rights and privileges of others.
8. Communicate safety concerns to school administrators.
9. Monitor bus stops, if possible. Drop off and pick up the students at the bus stop is encouraged.
10. Support all efforts to improve school bus safety.
11. Make sure children are aware of the dangers involved in and around the loading and unloading zone, including the dangers of loose clothing, clothing accessories, and other loose personal items.

Section III

SCHOOL BUS EVACUATION PROCEDURES

SCHOOL BUS EVACUATION

PRE-EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

The most important part of evacuation is developing and following a plan. Having a pre-emergency plan for each school bus and its route that includes all populations of students transported will save precious time. In many emergencies, less than two minutes is available to complete an evacuation before possible serious injury to students might occur. Local policies will determine when and how students are to be evacuated from a bus. School bus evacuations must be practiced with the students on school property with the school bus driver and under the supervision of the superintendent or building principal. Emergency response personnel must also be familiar with these policies, procedures, and techniques. (These plans should be shared with local fire, emergency, and rescue agencies.)

School buses carry a variety of students varying in size, age, and special needs.

1. Obtain a copy of a step-by-step procedure, including alternatives and special needs populations, prepared by the proper school authority.
2. Make sure that students have been instructed about what to do and how to proceed.
3. Identify three assistants from the student population to assist if an evacuation is necessary (and during evacuation drills). (These students should be pre-identified. Obtain written permission from parent or legal guardian for students' participation.)

Note: The [Illinois Professional School Bus Driver Training Curriculum](#) contains evacuation and emergency procedures.

WHEN TO EVACUATE

Evacuation is a very difficult situation. The driver must consider the fact that the safest place for the students may be on the school bus. In an actual emergency, the decision to evacuate the school bus is the initial step and one of the most important that the driver will have to make. That decision will initiate a chain of events to result in the safest possible situation for the passengers under the existing circumstances. The decision must be made as quickly as possible based on all the facts at hand.

Fire

Evacuate if there are any of the following indications that the bus is on fire or in danger of catching fire:

1. An open flame, smoke, hot tires, or any other indication of possible fire on or under the bus.
2. An object in flames, or in danger of catching fire, that is close enough to an immobile school bus to cause concern.
3. A combustible material or fuel susceptible to fire that is leaking from an immobile school bus or close enough to cause concern.

Disabled Bus

Evacuate the bus if it cannot be moved to a safe position and it is in:

1. The path of other motor vehicles.
2. The path of a train or adjacent to any railroad tracks.
3. A position of inadequate visibility and in danger of being hit. For example, in normal traffic conditions, the bus should be visible for a distance of 300 feet or more. A position over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist should be considered reason for evacuation.
4. A dangerous position related to water or a sudden, extreme drop.
5. The area of a hazardous spill for which there is a need to quickly evacuate to an area upwind at least 300 feet from the incident. The driver should pick a physical landmark for the students to go to.
6. Any position that you feel puts the students in danger because of their presence on the

school bus.

Natural Emergencies

Natural emergencies may require evacuation.

1. Try to pull the bus off the roadway away from large trees, electrical lines, telephone and utility poles, and buildings.
2. Should evacuation be necessary, move at least 100 feet away from the side of the school bus, but do not cross the roadway unless absolutely necessary. The driver should pick a physical landmark for the students to go to.
3. Determine the safest position for shelter from the emergency situation.
 - a. Remain in the bus during a blizzard if conditions allow.
 - b. Find a lower area in the ground (e.g., a ditch) or an embankment away from the bus during a tornado.
 - c. Locate students on highest ground possible during danger of flooding.

EVACUATION DRILLS

Due to the increased number of students being transported and the ever-increasing number of accidents on the highways, there is an urgent need to instruct students on how to properly vacate a school bus in an emergency. It is possible for students to block the emergency door if they are all trying to get out at the same time. There is also a possibility of danger when students jump from the rear emergency door exit. To avoid these situations, Illinois law ([105 ILCS 128/20](#)) requires that all students must experience a school bus evacuation drill at least once each year.

1. Such drills are to be scheduled and personally supervised by the proper school official or designated school administrator. Police, rescue, and fire personnel should be invited to participate in this training event so as to be prepared for a school bus emergency.
 - a. Never attempt to schedule or conduct a drill on your own.
 - b. Types of drills should be varied.
2. All drills are to be conducted on school property.
3. All bus-riding students, including those transported on extracurricular trips, must participate.

4. You may be advised that, due to a student's condition, a student with a disability may not be required to leave or be taken from the bus.
 - a. Proper school officials may determine that some alternative preparations will be adequate.
 - b. You may want to check with your supervisor if you have questions about moving any students.
5. Make sure someone has obtained parental/guardian consent before any student is assigned to assist with the evacuation.
6. Students should be instructed in how and where to obtain assistance in emergencies. This may be done by flagging down a passing motorist to call for help, using the two-way radio (if power exists)/cell phone, or sending an authorized student to a nearby house or office to make a call. The key issue is who to call. A possible solution would be for every driver to carry 3" x 5" cards with the following information:
 - a. Bus route and bus number.
 - b. Telephone number for transportation office.
 - c. Telephone number for fire, police, ambulance.
 - d. Bus driver's name.
7. Students should be instructed with demonstrations of the following:
 - a. Location and operation of all emergency exits.
 - b. Location, operation, and how to remove the fire extinguisher.
 - c. Location of the first aid kit.
 - d. Location and operation of the warning reflectors.
 - e. How to shut off the engine and set the parking brake.
 - f. How to open the front door using safety releases on manual, air, or vacuum doors, if so equipped.
8. Always use extreme care during an evacuation drill. Never force a student to jump from the bus; instead, teach them how to sit and slide or scoot out of the bus. Help them down and teach them that this action may be necessary to keep them safe.
9. Never allow students to engage in play activity during a drill. If they won't take the situation seriously, refer them to the proper authority for disciplinary action.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY

Primarily, the school bus driver must know the subject and be able to get the message and the commands across to the passengers. This will come with some practice. Each driver should have a chance to conduct a simulated drill. It will be much easier when working with the passengers.

Second, a driver must know the equipment and make sure it is in good working order. For

example, don't wait until the passengers are on board to find out the emergency door latch is inoperative. Make sure the fire extinguisher is properly charged and sealed and the first aid kit has the proper contents.

All school buses must provide at least two methods or routes of escape. With proper training, all passengers will know each available route of escape, how to operate each emergency exit, and how to assist during an evacuation. Use any and all exits to safely and efficiently evacuate the bus.

As a driver, you lead by being calm, positive, and sure of yourself.

SAFE RIDING PRACTICES RELATING TO EVACUATION

A program of instruction on safe riding practices for students is necessary because of accidents caused by those students who do not understand their responsibilities as bus passengers. The following rules for safe school bus riding and general behavior for bus passengers apply also to emergency bus evacuation and must be thoroughly explained to every student:

1. Remain seated and quiet until the bus is completely stopped. Do not change seats unless instructed to do so by the bus driver, an attendant/bus monitor, or a teacher.
2. Always face forward in the seat.
3. Keep hands, feet, and head inside the bus at all times. (Windows are allowed to be opened only partway; this will help discourage the problem.)
4. Be courteous to others and pay attention to the bus driver, teacher, an attendant/bus monitor, and evacuation helpers.
5. Do not push or shove while moving to the appropriate exit.
6. Use the handrails or the evacuation helpers' hands while leaving the bus. Be alert for traffic and/or pedestrians. Sit and scoot out the back exit.
7. Move to a safe place away from the school bus and remain there with the group. Regrouping should be approximately 100 feet (40 or 50 paces) from the bus.
8. Be aware of the "danger zones" -- the areas around the bus that are blind spots to the driver.
9. Observe safety procedures while crossing the street or proceeding to the regrouping area.

10. Do not talk to or accept rides from anyone.

Elementary grade levels should be instructed during assemblies in the most thorough manner concerning safe-riding practices. These students will be riding the school bus for many years and all aspects of the subject must be stressed.

Stress the responsibilities of upper-grade level school bus riders with regard to student behavior. The objective is student cooperation. This cooperation will alleviate distractions and subsequently reduce the number of school bus accidents.

The “Danger Zones” are the areas to the front, sides, and rear of the school bus that are not in direct eye contact of the bus driver.

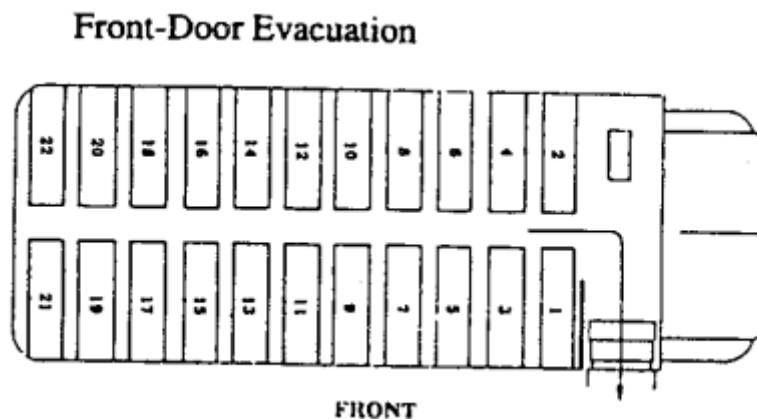
Students who come into these danger areas place themselves in jeopardy of serious injury or death. It is essential that the four “Danger Zones,” -- front, sides, and rear -- be fully explained.

If necessary, demonstrate by having one of the students go outside to the front of the bus. Have the student stoop to pick up a paper or book. Then have him/her stand. The students will get the picture very clearly. This can be demonstrated also by having a student drop a paper out of a side window. The person picking up the paper could very easily be placed in front of the rear duals.

See to it that all of the students, teachers and attendants/bus monitors are completely familiar with the “Danger Zones” before continuing.

EMERGENCY EXITS

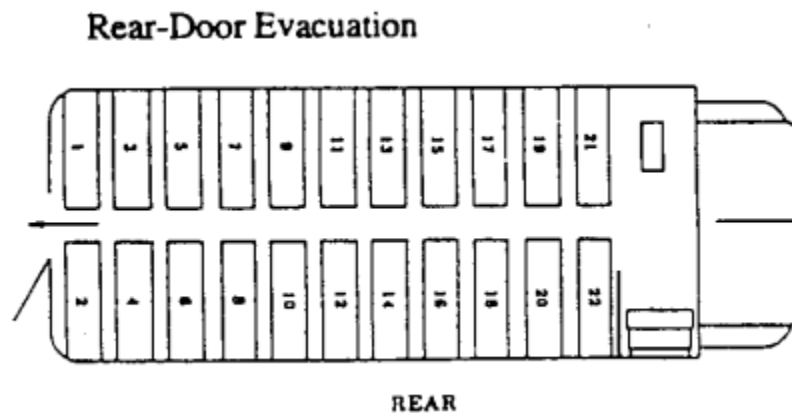
Front - Door Evacuation



1. Stop the bus and shut off the engine in a preselected location on the school grounds.

2. Make sure the parking brake is set and the key is not in the ignition. Then open the service entrance.
3. Stand and face the students. Give the following command: "Remain seated. This is an emergency drill — front-door evacuation."
4. Dismiss students starting with the right-hand front seat. Tap the shoulder of the student nearest the aisle. Direct the student to walk -- not run -- and use the handrail.
5. Hold up your left hand to restrain seat occupants to the left side until it is their turn.
6. Move down the aisle, dismissing seats of students alternately until the bus is empty.
7. As students leave the bus, they should proceed in an orderly pattern behind the line leader to a distance of at least 100 feet (about 50 paces) from the side of the school bus. Designation of a reference point is sometimes helpful.
8. Students should remain quietly in a grouping defined by the line leader until you are able to give them further directions.

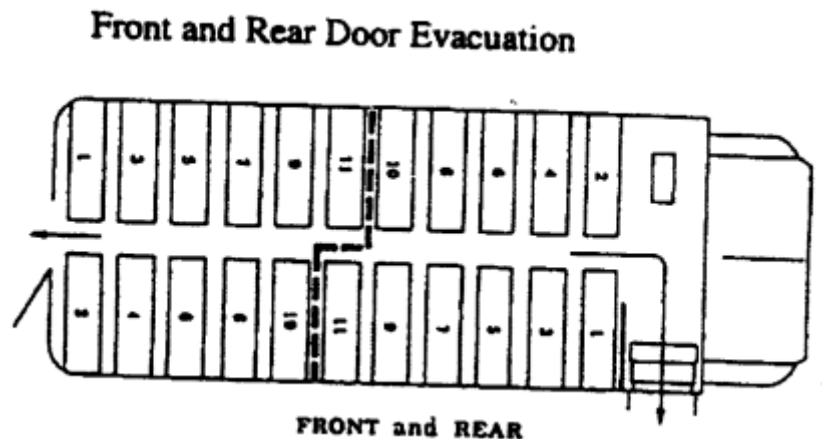
Rear – Door Evacuation



1. Stop the bus and shut off the engine in a preselected location on the school grounds.
2. Make sure the parking brake is set and the key is not in the ignition. Then open the service entrance.
3. Stand and face the students. Give the following command: "Remain seated. This is an emergency drill — rear-door evacuation."

- a. Train all students to carefully and properly open the rear emergency exit.
 - b. The student must understand not to open the door until you give the command.
4. Dismiss students starting with the right-hand rear seat. Tap the shoulder of the student nearest the aisle. Direct the students to walk, not run.
5. Explain and demonstrate the methods to be used for exiting the school bus.
 - a. Explain to students how they should sit and slide or scoot out of bus.
 - b. Exit from the rear door or side exit using the palm method.
 - c. Two students with their backs to the bus can assist those exiting the bus by each placing their hand close to the bus and placing their hand under the elbow of person exiting. The other hand remains flat (do not grab) and is used by the exiting student as a shelf (high five style). Students will use one palm of each helper to exit. Students may also use belly slide method (feet first) to slide off the bus when using the hatches or window exits in an emergency.

Front-and Rear-Door Evacuation



1. Stop the bus and shut off the engine in a preselected location on the school grounds.
2. Make sure the parking brake is set and the key is not in the ignition and then open the service entrance.
3. Stand and face the students. Give the following command: "Remain seated. This is an emergency drill, front- and rear-door evacuation."
4. Walk to the center of the bus between students sitting in seat row 6 (or to a point where there are an equal number of seats in front and back of your position) and face the rear of the bus.

5. All students to the front and those sitting in row 6 to your left will leave by the front service entrance upon command.
6. All students to the rear and those sitting in row 6 to your right will leave by the rear emergency door upon command.
7. Use the same procedures outlined for front-door evacuation and rear-door evacuation, except that students will have to move out by themselves upon command.

Side-Door Evacuation

A side-door evacuation is not recommended because students will be getting out on the traffic side of the bus. However, perform the emergency evacuation drill on school property and explain to the students how the side doors are to be used as emergency exits. Use the same exiting procedure as rear-door evacuation drill method (sit, slide, and scoot).

Roof-Hatch Evacuation

Explain to the passengers that the roof hatches are emergency exits also and not just air vents. You should give examples of when the use of roof hatches and side windows should be used (e.g., rollover, on its side, etc.).

Side Window Emergency Exit Evacuation

1. Open the emergency window per instructions on or near the bus emergency window exit.
2. Two helpers should be positioned, one in the front of the emergency window and one in the seat behind the emergency window.
3. The two helpers stand up in their seat area and support the open window with their hands.
4. Place both knees on the seat facing the aisle, back to the window.
5. Place both hands on seat bottom while facing the aisle/floor.
6. Proceed feet first out the window, lowering yourself over the windowsill on your

stomach.

7. Watch for loose articles of clothing (e.g., jewelry, belts, shirts, etc.) that may become hung up on the windowsill while exiting.
8. Once the first person is out of the bus and on the ground, he or she should remain by the bus and help lower the remaining people out the window and to the ground by forming a cradle with their hands under one foot.
9. The first two out of the bus continue helping until tired and/or replaced by other persons.
10. When the helpers inside the bus are the last ones on the bus and it is their turn to exit, taller students need to hold the window open (from the outside), allowing the two helpers inside to exit the bus.

EVACUATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Suggested Evacuation of Special Needs Students

Transportation staff should have an emergency evacuation plan that considers the individual capabilities and needs of each student, the type of behavior that might be exhibited during an emergency evacuation, and the type of wheelchair or support equipment being used for students.

Issues to Consider in Establishing an Evacuation Plan

1. Which students could help and to what extent?
2. How to deal with individual emergencies, such as seizures, during the evacuation process.
3. Whether students should be evacuated in their wheelchairs or removed from their wheelchairs before evacuation. Exercise caution: Some students have catheters or are tube fed. The hoses or tubes have to be anchored somewhere and are sometimes anchored to the wheelchair. Evacuating them bodily might rip hookups to the student that could cause severe internal problems.
4. How to disconnect or cut wheelchair securement and occupant protection equipment including belts, trays, and other support equipment.

5. Students who may make a decision to run away once they have been evacuated should be evacuated last.
6. The length of time a student requiring life-support equipment or medical-care procedures can survive if such service is interrupted or delayed during the evacuation process.
7. If a downed power line is touching the bus, the student cannot touch both the bus and ground at the same time. You will instruct them to jump or hop from the bus to avoid shock.

CATEGORY	EVACUATION PROCEDURE	COMMENTS
Hearing Impairments	1. Have students evacuate by walking or crawling to the nearest unrestrictive exit.	1. Mild communication problems; look and speak directly at the student.
	2. Have helpers assist the drivers using the fire extinguisher, if necessary.	2. No noted mobility problems.
	3. Have the helper control other students at a control area.	
Deaf/Blind	1. Get attention by "tapping twice" on the shoulder.	1. Restricted communication problems.
	2. Use finger spelling to indicate evacuation.	2. No mobility problem.
Mental Impairment	1. Develop routines of word commands for evacuation.	1. Limited communication problems.
	2. May be a designated helper for blind students.	2. No noted mobility problems.
Mentally Challenged	1. Ambulatory (walk off).	1. Assess each individual to determine if they can or cannot help.
	2. Have students with capabilities help other students to evacuate.	
	3. Have students assist driver by using fire	

	extinguisher if a fire is present.	
Orthopedically Impaired	1. Non-ambulatory (confined to some seating device). May crawl or need to be carried to the exit.	1. May have extreme communication and mobility problem.
Other Health Impairment and Behavior /Emotional Disorder and Speech Impairment	1. Use a firm tone and physically direct the student to an emergency exit.	1. Difficult to communicate with students.
	2. Students may have to be guided by another student to the control area.	2. Students have mobility to walk off the bus.
Specific Learning Disability	1. Have student evacuate by walking to the nearest exit assisted by a helper.	1. May not understand instructions in an emergency situation.
	2. Speak slowly and clearly and use simple sentences.	
Visual Impairment	1. Can walk off with help of a selected helper.	1. Can communicate.
	2. Have student hold hands with another student while evacuating. Use the same method in the control area.	2. Has mobility.

Summary

Accidents do happen. When they do, it is too late to begin teaching an emergency procedure. The main purpose of instruction pertaining to bus evacuation is to that passengers at all age levels know their responsibilities. It is extremely important to know about all escape routes, where each is located, how each one works, and the proper procedure for leaving a vehicle in an emergency.

Section IV

TRANSPORTATION OTHER THAN TO AND FROM SCHOOL

TRANSPORTATION OTHER THAN TO AND FROM SCHOOL

SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITY OPERATIONS

Each school system that provides transportation to school-sponsored activities should have comprehensive policies and guidelines for this type of transportation. They may delegate responsibility for this function to the supervisor of pupil transportation. Lines of responsibility and authority need to be defined and personnel who are involved must have an understanding of their respective responsibilities so that there is safe and efficient transportation to school-sponsored activities.

Students should be transported to school-sponsored activities in school buses that meet state and federal standards That is the safest means of transportation available for such activities.

A field trip is a trip that is related to the regular curriculum of participating students that occurs during the five clock hours of instruction. The location of the field trip is considered to be an alternative attendance center for purposes of Evidence-Based Funding.

A school-related activity trip is defined as an activity of the school district that does not require student participation as part of the educational services of the district, as part of the students' regular class for credit schedule and the required five clock hours of instruction.

The following items need to be considered when developing criteria for school-sponsored activities:

Policies and Guidelines

1. Purpose of trip (instructional, athletic, pupils/spectators recreation, etc.).

2. Funding source (district or individual school funds, individual charge, parent group, etc.).
3. Administrative approval:
 - a. Person who has authority to approve the trip.
4. Priority guidelines for trip scheduling if all requests cannot be accommodated.
5. Advance notification: Allow adequate time for approval process and for making driver and vehicle arrangements.
6. Methods of travel: This may include district-owned or contracted bus; commercial carrier or local transit equipment; air, boat, rail or combination of the above; private or school passenger automobile, when required by special or unique needs. (Refer to the [Required Information for Charter Coach Bus Companies](#) found on the ISBE website.)
7. A Trip Request Form includes all necessary information from trip arrangements, payroll, reimbursement, and other local needs.
8. An adult chaperone is required to be on all activity trips. Responsibilities include passenger control with drivers maintaining final authority.
9. Discipline and emergency medical procedures: A trip release to be signed by parents should include procedures concerning difficult to severe behavioral and medical problems and emergency policies.
10. Communication: Drivers, pupils, chaperones, and parents should be made aware of applicable rules and regulations. Parents should have destination information, mode of transportation, chaperones, departure and return times, appropriate dress, and what the pupils should bring with them. A signed note from the parent or guardian is important. A detailed itinerary for all persons involved is advisable. Identification of special medical problems in the event of an emergency in route is necessary. Teachers, parents, and chaperones should be included in emergency evacuation drills.
11. Luggage: A procedure for transporting luggage or equipment, which is prohibited in the passenger compartment by state law and/or local regulations, is necessary. Loose luggage or equipment, which could cause injury or block passageways, should never be transported in the passenger compartment.
12. Out-of-state trips: Policies should detail whether out-of-state trips are permitted and any applicable restrictions. Regulations for states to be visited should be reviewed prior to the trip. (Refer to the [School Bus Driver Hours of Service for Out-of-State Field Trips](#) found on ISBE's website.)
13. Insurance policies: Policies should be reviewed, or agents contacted to determine

adequacy of coverage. This is an absolute necessity for trips scheduled to another state or country. If vehicles other than district-owned are used, the Board of Education should determine the minimum insurance coverage to be carried. A current copy of the contract or commercial carriers' insurance should be on file with the school district. ([625 ILCS 5/12-707.01](#))

14. Road and weather check: A person responsible for checking road conditions should be designated. School transportation personnel from other district, state patrols, and highway divisions are generally cooperative in supplying road information. If warranted, the weather bureau should also be contacted. A planned route for trips should be determined prior to initiation of the trip. The use of Google Maps or the [National Weather Service](#) can be very helpful.
15. Contingency plans: Policies should detail who has authority to make decisions if the unexpected happens during a trip. Impassable roads, accidents, or mechanical breakdowns are examples. Drivers and chaperones should have access to that authority's phone number. It is also advisable to obtain phone numbers of transportation personnel in various communities and school districts where activity vehicles regularly travel. Provisions should include plans for staying overnight if conditions do not permit a safe trip home. It is advisable to develop a mutual aid directory for contact within athletic league boundaries, which could aid in the event of mechanical emergencies. Drivers should be trained in procedures and regulations relating to trip accidents. It is advisable to require two certified drivers on extended trips exceeding 10 hours unless item "16" below is followed to the letter.
16. Driving hours: School districts should have regulations based on a common-sense application of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. (Refer to the [School Bus Driver Hours of Service for Out-of-State Field Trips](#) found on ISBE's website.)
17. Driver selection: Criteria for driver assignments are necessary to avoid conflict and confusion. The criteria should include a driver's knowledge, skill, experience, and familiarity with activity-trip vehicles. The area to be traveled should also be a consideration. Drivers should be notified at least three days in advance of the trip date. Drivers who only drive trips occasionally should be periodically evaluated for driving ability and vehicle familiarity and should hold the same license and certification as regular school bus drivers.
18. A list of all students and passengers being transported to be kept by the driver and left with proper authorities at the school or institution. It is recommended that each coach/sponsor have an up-to-date roster of students making the trip. The office will also maintain a copy of the same roster. Before the bus leaves the school, the coach/sponsor will email a secretary or administrator confirming they are leaving and provide the names of the students and staff on the bus (verifying the list is correct as maybe some individuals were sick, ineligible to attend, etc.). Prior to returning home,

the coach/sponsor will do the same thing (verifying those who are not returning via the school bus). This way, the district will have accurate records of who is actually on the bus in the event of an accident.

19. An emergency evacuation drill to be performed by the driver for students and chaperones before each field trip.
20. Weather cancelations: When school is canceled or dismissed early due to weather, all transportation to extracurricular events should be canceled as well.

Vehicle and Equipment

The following should be taken into consideration when selecting trip vehicles:

1. Miles to be traveled.
2. Terrain and climate conditions.
3. Number and age group of pupils.
4. Luggage and equipment.
5. Driver familiarity with the vehicle and route.
6. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards if contract-operated and crossing state lines.

Consideration should be given for specialized equipment needed, such as:

1. Luggage storage.
2. Public address system.
3. Radio (AM/FM, two-way, cellular telephone).
4. Tires (off-road tread or recaps; recaps on the front axle are prohibited).
5. Spare tire.
6. Tool requirements (flashlight, pliers, screwdrivers, deicer, spare fuses, etc.).
7. Equipment requirements for an extended trip. (It is advisable to communicate with transportation personnel at the destination.)

8. Cash or district credit card for fuel, tolls, parking fees, and personal needs.

Vehicles should pass the same inspections as regular route buses and a detailed check prior to activity trips.

Training

Specialized training should be provided for activity-trip drivers. Training should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. State laws and applicable policies and rules.
2. Familiarity with activity-trip vehicle and its components.
3. Familiarity with specialized equipment and how to use it.
4. Familiarity with local and state trip requirements.
5. Route familiarization, which might include a dry run prior to the trip date, especially if extreme conditions, terrain, or road difficulties may be encountered.
6. Discipline procedures on trips.
7. Driving under adverse conditions (night driving, slippery roads, or unfamiliar mountainous driving).
8. Destination location and parking areas (maps).
9. Parking location if other than pupil destination.
10. Provisions for bus security at destination.

Section V

USE OF VEHICLES

USE OF VEHICLES

This information is provided to help clarify the use of vehicles for school districts and/or contractors providing transportation for students.

For information on the proper use of vehicles refer to the following documents:

[School Vehicle Use](#)

[Vehicles Used by School Districts to Transport Students](#)

Activity Operations Not Related to Schools

This subsection is intended to address the various uses of a yellow school bus for operations other than to and from school and school-related activities.

1. Use, Procedures, and Policies

- a. The school bus operator, in accordance with state regulations and/or laws governing school bus use, should establish procedures whereby school buses can be scheduled for non-route use. Such scheduling should not conflict with, or be given priority over, the regular class-related demands for school buses by the school system.
- b. The school system, as part of local government or in cooperation with transportation contractors, may utilize buses during times of community emergency or crisis when demand for other public vehicles, such as trains and transit buses, is so great as to exceed available supply.

2. Legal Requirements

- a. School buses operating on public roads and crossing state and national boundaries must adhere to the rules of the road in jurisdictions in which they are operating.

- b. All permits and fees need to be procured in accordance with applicable state and local laws before the trip is undertaken.

3. Operational Requirements

- a. Vehicle equipment used for activities must be in good working order, well maintained, and otherwise capable of withstanding the demands of the trip.
- b. All school buses and drivers operating under this section shall comply with all state and federal requirements, including Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations applicable to inter-and intra-state passenger transportation.
- c. Aisles and exits must always be kept free of blockages.

Section VI

EVALUATION OF THE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

EVALUATION OF THE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Each school district should have a plan for evaluating its pupil transportation program. Such evaluations should enable school districts to:

1. Verify compliance with rules, regulations, and laws.
2. Audit the efficiency of program service.
3. Monitor operational economy.
4. Ensure the safety of the program in operation.
5. Improve the quality of service.

Major Types of Evaluations

1. Informal reviews by district personnel.
2. Formal evaluations:
 - a. Private consultant
 - b. State agency
3. Periodic evaluations:
 - a. Monthly
 - b. Annually
 - c. Biannually

Areas Subject to Evaluation

1. Board of Education policy.
2. Routing procedure. (Route hazard evaluation should be performed twice annually.)
3. Types of service provided.
4. Financial obligations.
5. Quality of service.
6. Training of staff.
7. Maintenance of the vehicles and equipment.
8. Classroom training of all students on safe school bus riding practices.